**ENGL 2303: How to Make An American Book**

**Spring 2014**

Instructor: Catherine Corder, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Tues 1-3pm, Wed 1-3pm, and by appointment

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**Course Information**

Course number: 2303-007

Room: COBA 252

Meeting times: 10am MWF

**Course Description**

American print culture is a fairly new academic field that pulls from literature, history, art, graphic design, and even business, for it was the Industrial Revolution that gave rise to inexpensive print technologies, which in turn had a tremendous impact on our national habits of publishing, of writing, and of reading itself. In this special topics class, we will examine several different forms of American literature, including poetry, short stories, excerpts from novels, and essays, written by such American authors as Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman. However, we will be focusing not only on the content and meanings of these texts, but also on the physical books, magazines, and pamphlets where these texts first appeared, and how that material form affects our reading and understanding.

We will examine how a book is made: the ways in which paper or parchment comes together with ink and type, and with leather or cardboard bindings. Other class activities may include exploring historical printing presses, making marbled paper, and creating an artist’s book. We will also look closely at the readings themselves, as we investigate various aspects of narrative (point of view, setting, plot, characterization, and theme) and other literary elements to see how the material book provides an excellent perspective for understanding American society and culture

**Goals**

* To encourage students to see that literary studies matter and to foster enjoyment of literature, as students engage with ideas and beliefs in ways that extend beyond the English classroom.
* To help students recognize that literature does not occur as isolated literary events, but as a complex dialogue with cultural and historical contexts.
* To develop students’ ability to read critically by studying a variety of literary elements such as form, structure, and style.
* To enable students to demonstrate their understanding of literary texts and their ability to analyze such texts in writing, in online discussions, and through class discussions.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to do the following:

* Demonstrate their knowledge of a variety of literary terms and elements.
* Identify a variety of literary elements within literary texts.
* Explain and analyze how context shapes the composition, reception, and interpretation of texts.
* Demonstrate their ability to discuss literature using textual evidence to support assertions.
* Conduct research using the UTA Library resources.
* Use correct MLA documentations of primary and secondary sources.

**Required Texts**

*The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, shorter eighth edition

Other readings will be available on Blackboard

**Class Resources**

On the Blackboard site for this class, you will find the course policies and procedures, the class syllabus, as well as assignment prompts, readings, and additional resources for studying literature.

**Grading**

Your final grade is based upon the following assignments. These assignments will give you the opportunity to practice skills that you learned in your first-year writing classes: writing good thesis statements, providing relevant textual evidence, constructing useful commentary on the evidence providence, and making clear connections between ideas.

Book Notes: After we have had a session in the Special Collections of the UTA library, you will have six book notes to complete. I will put six “print artifacts” on reserve in the library. You will be able to study the book/newspaper/map/journal there in the library. The prompts will provide suggestions about how you examine the print artifact. In addition to your initial post, each prompt will ask you to respond to one other student’s post. In your response, you should go beyond simply saying “nice job” or “I agree.” Use this as an opportunity to continue the discussion raised in your classmates’ posts.

Online Discussions: Please think of your responses to the Discussion prompts as mini-essays. Write them as correctly, coherently, and clearly as you can. Use complete sentences; use a topic or thesis sentence to unify your essay. In your responses to the prompts, please try to go into as much detail as possible. Frequently the prompt will seem like a barrage of questions. You don’t need to try and answer them all (and please don’t use them as a template to model your answer on), as they are meant to be helpful places to start and things to think about in drafting your response. I will be grading your responses not according to how close you come to what I think is the “right” answer, but on how much your responses indicate thoughtful and sensitive interactions with the texts that we are studying. In addition to your initial post, each prompt will ask you to respond to one other student’s post. In your response, you should go beyond simply saying “nice job” or “I agree.” Use this as an opportunity to continue the discussion raised in your classmates’ posts.

Quizzes: There will be ten short, unscheduled quizzes that will cover the reading assigned for that day.

Exams: There will be two in-class, multiple-choice or short-answer exams, which will cover the readings and discussions up to the date of the exam.

Essays: The three essays ask you to analyze/explicate an essay, short story, or poem that we have not covered in our class readings and discussions.

 Points

Reading quizzes (10) 100

Online class discussions (6) 150

Book Notes (4) 100

Exam 1 50

Exam 2 50

Essay 1 50

Essay 2 50

Essay 3 50

**Total possible points** **650**

530 – 600 = A

470 – 529 = B

410 – 469 = C

350 – 409 = D

Below 349 = F

Late Assignments. The online assignments (book notes and class discussions) are due on the date and time indicated on each prompt. I will not accept late online assignments, so you will not be able to access the assignment after the specified due date.

The three essays are due at the beginning of class on the due date specified. Essays turned in after the class has begun will receive a 10-point deduction unless the instructor has agreed to late submission in advance of the due date. For each calendar day following, the work will receive an additional 10-point deduction. **I will not accept essays after three late days.** If you must be absent, your work is still due on the assigned date.

**Syllabus and Schedule Changes**

I try to make my syllabus as complete as possible; however, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies /assignments. Instructors reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. I will inform students of any changes through email.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Reading** | **Assignment** |
| Mon 1/13 | Introductions/syllabus/assignments |  |
| Wed 1/15 | How to make a book |  |
| Fri 1/17 | **American Printing: Beginnings to 1700** |  |
| Mon 1/20 | MLK Holiday – no class |  |
| Wed 1/22 | John Smith, *The General History of Virginia…*, pp. 59-69 |  |
| Fri 1/24 | Anne Bradstreet“Before the Birth of One of Her Children,” p. 120“To My Dear and Loving Husband,” p. 120“In Memory of My Dear Grandchild…,” pp. 121-2 |  |
| Mon 1/27 | Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography*, pp. 248-92 | Discussion #1 |
| Wed 1/29 | Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano…,”* pp. 355-68 |  |
| Fri 1/31 | Phillis Wheatley“On Being Brought from Africa to America,” p. 403“On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield,” pp. 405-6 |  |
| Mon Feb 3 | **Printing the Revolution** |  |
| Wed Feb 5 | Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, pp. 325-31 |  |
| Fri Feb 7 | Thomas Jefferson, “Declaration of Independence,” pp. 339-44 |  |
| Mon Feb 10 | James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, pp. 485-91 | Discussion #2 |
| Wed Feb 12 | [visit to Special Collections] |  |
| Fri Feb 14 | Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Minister’s Black Veil,” pp. 636-45 |  |
| Mon Feb 17 | Exam #1 |  |
| Wed Feb 19 | Edgar Allan Poe, “The Black Cat,” pp. 718-24 |  |
| Fri Feb 21 | Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, pp. 901-10 | Book Notes #1 |
| Mon Feb 24 | Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” pp. 1002-5 | **Essay #1**  |
| Wed Feb 26 | Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, pp. 781-802 |  |
| Fri Feb 28 | Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, pp. 802-18 |  |
| Mon Mar 3 | **Printing and the Civil War** | Discussion #3 |
| Wed Mar 5 | *Southern Literary Messenger*, available on Blackboard |  |
| Fri Mar 7 | Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself,” sections 1-8, pp. 1024-30 |  |
| Mon Mar 10 | Spring Break |  |
| Wed Mar 12 | Spring Break |  |
| Fri Mar 14 | Spring Break |  |
| Mon Mar 17 | Emily Dickinson“Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers,” pp. 1194-5“I’m Nobody,” p. 1197 |  |
| Wed Mar 19 | Emily Dickinson“Because I Could Not Stop for Death,” pp. 1206-7“Publication…” p. 1212 |  |
| Fri Mar 21 | Louisa May Alcott, “Pauline’s Passion and Punishment,” available on Blackboard | Book Notes #2 |
| Mon Mar 24 | Exam #2 |  |
| Wed Mar 26 | Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, Chaps xxx-xxx, pp. 1289-xxx |  |
| Fri Mar 28 | Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, Chaps xxx-xxx, pp. 1289-xxx | Discussion #4 |
| Mon Mar 31 | Bret Harte, “The Luck of the Roaring Camp,” pp. 1482-9 | Essay #2 due |
| Wed Apr 2 | “One Farmer’s Wife,” available on Blackboard |  |
| Fri Apr 4 | Kate Chopin, “The Story of an Hour,” pp. 1609-11 | Book Notes #3 |
| Mon Apr 7 | Jack London, “To Build a Fire,” pp. 1812-23 |  |
| Wed Apr 9 | Robert Frost “The Death of the Hired Hand,” pp. 1914-5“Desert Places,” p. 1923 |  |
| Fri Apr 11 | Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams”Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” pp. 1957-8“The Red Wheelbarrow,” p. 1968“Landscape with the Fall of Icarus,” p. 1970 | Discussion #5 |
| Mon Apr 14 | Katherine Anne Porter, “Flowering Judas,” pp. 2214-22 |  |
| Wed Apr 16 | e.e. cummings“in Just-,” p. 2137“anyone lived in a pretty how town,” p. 2141“r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r” available on Blackboard |  |
| Fri Apr 18 | **Books since 1945** | Book Notes #4 |
| Mon Apr 21 | Jack Kerouac, *Big Sur*, pp. 2499-2507 |  |
| Wed Apr 23 | Alan Ginsberg, “Howl,” pp. 2540-8 |  |
| Fri Apr 25 | **Underground publications and artists’ books** | Discussion #6 |
| Mon Apr 28 | [visit to Fine Arts library] |  |
| Wed Apr 30 | Art Spiegelman, *Maus*, pp. 2736-52 |  |
| Fri May 2 | Last day of class | Essay #3 due |